

# THE COMPANION

AND WEEKLY MISCELLANY.

BY EDWARD EASY, ESQ.

—“A safe COMPANION, and an EASY Friend.”—Pope.—

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FOR THE EDITOR.

## NO. 10.—CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATION OF A SYLPH.

*Conclusion of an Essay upon the influence of the French Revolution on letters and Science in Europe, and that which their decline may produce upon taste in America.*

WITH how much delight should I see the minds of the Americans, glowing with that ardor for the fine arts, with that warm enthusiasm, which inspired the elevated souls of the noble and generous Greeks.

With how much pleasure should I see them animated with that laudable passion for the *grand* and *beautiful* which produced the immortal age of Pericles, the most glorious æra of the human intellect, as well as that which marked the first Roman edifices with that vigorous stamp, which presaged the splendour of its future éclat !\*

When shall I see Portico's† raised in their cities whose disciples, worthy of contending with the great men of sublime antiquity, may console the learned world for the loss of Europe.

\* Rome first begun by robbers, with a thousand cottages, very soon saw immense edifices take their place. The common-sewers of Tarquin which amongst others still exist, have been the universal wonder, by their size, their solidity, and the beautiful simplicity of their architecture.

† The Portico of Athens, which was built at first for the amusement of the people, became the rendezvous of the most celebrated philosophers of the universe, and they gave their lectures there.

The Romans, in imitation of the Greeks, raised magnificent ones also, which often served as academies. They spared neither marble nor statues in these galleries, which were surrounded by gardens. Each of Nero's Portico's was three thousand steps long: Pliny's was admirable, and that of Pompey was the most charming walk in Rome.

Without doubt there must be a means of exciting this noble emulation, and hastening its honorable results. How easy and glorious would it be for the United States to imitate in this point the generosity of the ancient Italians, who invited amongst them the letters and the fine arts, which the crash of the two empires, had almost entirely banished from the ancient continent! How easy would it be since a passion for luxury has already become so strong and universal, to direct it into such a channel, as that its great and useful object might be its justification.

Why should any greater difficulty be found here, than in the most inconsiderable states, *ancient and modern*, in appropriating a part of the public revenue and demesnes, to the embellishment of ports and cities; to the collection of precious objects in painting, sculpture, medals, prints, architecture and models of every kind? by this means, those who feel themselves inclined to cultivate the fine arts, would insensibly tho' efficaciously, form themselves to a knowledge of the incontestible rules of the beautiful. It is thus that at the same time the taste of those would be corrected who might learn to appreciate men of genius as they merit, and give them honorable and lucrative employment.

But since it is impossible to leave the narrow path of prejudice, without the most impartial and methodical study: since the human mind has no other method to adopt in the new world, to free itself from the *deep influence of habit*, than that to which the three other quarters of the globe were obliged to submit during many ages; it follows from thence that it must necessarily have recourse to the same plan.

I repeat that there has been no nation, however inconsiderable it might be, that if inspired with a passion for the fine arts, did not establish museums, academies and public schools, which were confined to the care of men of merit, who were attracted by the charm, of the comfort



and distinction which were offered to them from one end of Europe to the other.

It will then be a propitious day for America, when men jealous of the title of *Father of Letters* become the founders of schools and academies destined to resuscitate the famous Lyceums\* of antiquity, where the elegance of controversy; the welcome given to strangers; the magnificence of the arts; and even local beauties, diffused through the character of the inhabitants of these poetical countries, a politeness, an *urbanity*, a grace of which the happy expression of attic salt, so excellently paints all the delicacy and the perfection.

If then this incontestible truth is acknowledged, that though nature gives genius, it is study alone, long and ardent study that can form taste: no rational being can deny the urgent necessity of labouring to give the public mind a less selfish and more magnanimous direction, than it must be confessed, at present absorbs it almost entirely in mercantile speculations, and financiering pursuits.

Without doubt a *new* people who have every thing to create, must occupy themselves with speculations, but were not the Greeks also commercial? Yes; and it is precisely their example I would invoke, to prove, that it is possible to be at once a merchant, and a man of letters, taste and generosity.

I shall not speak of the *Medicis*, nor of the *Florentines*, who made so noble a use of the riches they had acquired in commerce;—nor dwell upon the example of the English, whose munificence towards genius is also celebrated, but I shall cite only the Greeks, to prove how easily the riches produced by trade and navigation, may be devoted to the advantage of letters, arts, and national glory.

The Greeks prided themselves in lavishing their gold, to procure the most delicate delights of the mind, the most delicious enjoyments in their habitations, and in rendering their country illustrious, in the eyes of strangers, by the perfection of their arts, the magnificence of their public edifices, the incredible sumptuousness of their spectacles and their entertainments, and by the imposing military tone of their youth.

This model is sufficiently noble to excite emulation, and to dispense the necessity of further comparisons. But should it be much longer neglected, it is painful to fore-

\* The Lyceum was a celebrated school at Athens, where Aristotle and his disciples, explained their philosophy, under Portico's shaded by trees, and ornamented with baths of the most elegant construction and statues of great men.

see, that in the state of languor, indeed of *disgrace* under which it must be candidly confessed the sciences and the fine arts at present groan in America, *the first political crisis may by a single blow destroy their yet-superficial and illy cemented foundations, and destroy even the elementary ideas of them which are yet so faintly developed.*

I know it is natural to man, to banish from his thoughts whatever pains, and cannot flatter him; and such is, supereminently be it said en passant, the essential character of the French, which prompted *Mably* to give them the title of the most thoughtless of people. But this system of voluntary want of foresight, or rather laziness of mind cannot retard the irresistible progress of the nature of things: it is becoming only to children, it is unworthy of men.

If then the last hypothesis I have hazarded should be questioned; let the rapid & terrible influence be remembered, that political convulsions, often slight in their commencement, have produced at all times on the human mind. By the fate that the sciences have experienced, in consequence of these shocks, in countries in which they had flourished for a *thousand ages*; let it be judged with what facility they would be abandoned and *forgotten*, in regions, where but a short time since *they were unknown*, & where they still find so much difficulty, in taking the slightest root; the point at which they would remain may be well supposed, if no attempt is made to cultivate them, until the last remains of men of taste become extinct on the ancient continent when with difficulty even their traces will be discovered.

It is to the real friends of their country I submit these reflections. It is to them that I observe, America has at present before her, two very opposite perspectives; that is, the power of enriching herself with the most unheard of rapidity by the ruins of learned Europe; or the choice of being involved in the gloom which thickens every day more and more upon the old world; as it overwhelmed stiff-necked Egypt, before the haughty Pharoah was suddenly swallowed up, with all his chariots and his hosts.\*

Far then be every sentiment, unworthy of truly noble and elevated souls, which might tend to restrain or repress those measures of encouragement and generosity, which *prudence* dictates in this *DECISIVE* moment towards the last generation of the disciples of the European schools! Inaccessible to those prejudices so fatal to the developement of genius; every true American patriot, should say, in con-

\* Exodus chap. x. ver. 14.



templating from afar, the eruptions which work the overthrow of the ancient world and which disperse abroad the useful votaries of the muses :

“ Let us without fear invoke these illustrious shades : that the eclat which environs them, may dazzle and importune the ignorant, and the envious ! but we, who seek for instruction, let us assemble if possible all the rays of their glory, to form the day-star of truth, and let us of so many splendid beams form a focus of light, that shall repel the gloom, IN WHICH BARBARISM THREATENS TO INVOLVE US ! ” \*

These observations may perhaps have appeared lengthy to some persons ; because in a subject which embraces so many various interests, and such a confusion of events, it is impossible equally to please every class of readers. But those to whom it was my intention to present them, I mean reflecting, impartial and *independant* minds, will judge without doubt, that it would have been as difficult to have curtailed these observations, as it would have been easy to have justified them, by the most convincing testimony, and the most complete demonstration. Because indignation has given me an implacable recollection of these events, and I will add that providence appears to have gifted man with *memory*, that fortunate vice might not with too much impunity enjoy the fruit of its crimes, though it may have succeeded in stifling the “ still small voice of conscience ” and the canker of remorse, which are so justly called “ *the active ministers of celestial justice.* ”

I am but the mirror and the echo of facts at present sufficiently notorious all over Europe ; and on any other occasion but this, I could shew the most solemn and incontestible proofs of them ; I could even as it were mark their verbal process, day by day and hour by hour.

Whether they please or displease is of little importance : THEY DO EXIST, “ *and the heavens and the earth may pass away, but TRUTH will remain for ever.* ” I have necessarily recalled these well authenticated circumstances, to confirm the consequences I have drawn from them, and which at least cannot be accused of having been rashly hazarded after the number of authorities that serve as their foundation.

In short I have endeavoured to demonstrate in the first place that previous to the French Revolution, enlightened men had foreseen that a new state of *barbarism* was FAST APPROACHING, that the fatal events which had occurred were

worthy the utmost attention of rational beings, & were also the *precursors* of that terrible convulsion which seems formed to change even in the present age, the *entire face of the earth* ; while no nation can henceforth hope for safety, even in the immensity of seas and deserts, beyond which we might heretofore have supposed security would have dwelt.

That this great shock has broken down every opposition which might have retarded this great catastrophe, and that it is absurd to hope for any happy result from it, either for morals, the sciences, letters and the arts, as much as it would be senseless to pretend that wholesome and vivifying emanations could proceed from a mephitic cave, or a corrupted sink in fermentation.

That, very far from that, the universal influence of this revolution, is of all means, the most sudden, and the most efficacious, to occasion wherever it can act, the same effects which it produced in France, and under all its jurisdiction, revolutionary or military.

That the system of education, morals, politics and despotism in France, is calculated only to DESTROY genius ; and to diffuse amongst the people, a religious & political indifference, the incalculable consequences of which, cannot but operate the DISSOLUTION OF THE SOCIAL BODY.

I have shewn what advantages, by the security of its local situation, by the great hopes which the future presents, by the liberty which the press and the spirit of criticism enjoy in this country may be derived from the calamities of the ancient continent, for the individual glory of America, the preservation of letters and the honour of the human mind.

I leave it to be determined, how far I may have attained the end I proposed to myself in this essay. I would willingly have enlarged further, on the means of encouragement to be employed for obtaining the useful and honourable results, which form the object of my wishes. Amongst the number of these means, I have only pointed out, the reception to be offered to genius, the extinction of prejudices, the repression of envy, the institution of establishments, the erection of public monuments, the freedom and necessity of criticism to reform taste : but I could not develop these views to their full extent, because I should have been led into discussions which could not have failed to have touched both at the administration and the character of this country. I have therefore prescribed myself upon these objects, a reserve the most scrupulous and absolute, abandoning the subject to the wise, and the lovers of their country.

\* La Harpe introduction to his Cours de littérature.



This essay, however incomplete, will, I hope suffice to justify the purity of the motives which have sometimes, and may again prompt me to break silence. In yielding to the reasons which have induced me to do so now, *I have once more performed a duty, towards a hospitable land, where I should rejoice that the useful and austere accents of experience, might not meet the fate of the voice in the Desert . . . . .* In short, I should rejoice that leaving to Europe, its astonishing *spirit of Vertigo*, a proof so striking of MALEDICTION, the inhabitants of this country, rendered attentive by the example of others, should, when they perceive *the sky red and lowering, persuade themselves, that on the morrow, the weather must be foul and stormy . . . . .*\*

But I faint under the weight of this melancholy subject, which has already twenty times almost sunk me into lethargy, for it must not be forgotten that I am a *Sylph . . . . .*

If ever our friend Pope,† has initiated you into the secret mysteries of our organization, and the knightly duties of our light ærial militia; you will be still less surprised, at the strength which has enabled me to converse so lengthily with you upon so grave a subject, than at the time I have found for such employment . . . . . The first moment I can seize to come & sport around your ear, I will explain the important duties that are exacted of us. But I shall take good care, not to direct my view again towards the other furious and decrepid hemisphere. Far from me henceforth, be sad and tiresome reason; I will for the future, only entertain you with the thousand and one trifles, more or less whimsical, that the Chinese shadows of this lower world, daily present to our observation. Because since every intelligent creature is gifted with *some* folly; I think it is better to chuse that of the indefatigable laughter of *Abdera*,‡ and fly as far as possible from the gloomy philosophy of the weeping Heracitus. || Adieu—I must return to my post of honour.

M. A.

\* St. Matt. ch. xvi.

† Rape of the Lock.

‡ Democritus, who laughed at every thing.

|| Heracitus continually wept at the extravagance and wickedness of men, and from his melancholy, he received the epithet of the weeping philosopher.

N. B. To the APPENDIX of No. 9, of this ESSAY.

The fifth of these prisoners was a wretch, who having been mortified by some representations his brother had made him on the scandalous depravity of his morals, availed himself of a feigned reconciliation to assassinate him, which he did, and then threw the body into the river. As this *fratricide* belonged to a family and a profession equally respectable, the court to save him from the scaffold, shut him up in the Bastille, where probably, and justly, he was to have passed the remainder of his days.

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FOR THE COMPANION.

The following story is from Wolff's Sketches, he (says Aiken's Review) who can read it without emotion is endowed with an apathy which excites no envy from us.

During my short stay at Florence, I was somewhat surprised one morning, while at breakfast, by a visit from a young man, whom I immediately recognized to be Charles —. Many years had elapsed since his abrupt departure from England. His history being peculiarly interesting, I shall take the liberty of here inserting it.—Engaged in commerce at an early age, and taken into the house of his uncle, an eminent merchant in London, his prospects in life were most flattering. From his abilities, his attention, and improvement, Charles became the favourite, and was at length considered as heir to his uncle's large possessions. A partner in the same house, who was a man of superior sense, but addicted to extravagant vices, blighted this fair prospect almost in the bud! He was married to a depraved but beautiful woman, with whom he had formerly lived on easier terms. Led on in defiance of frequent serious remonstrances from one act of expensive dissipation to another, his debts accumulated in an alarming degree, which he still hoped to discharge by means of the gaming-table. Surrounded by titled black-legs, and wary sharpers, he engaged on unequal terms, and increased those debts, which, in honour, he became obliged to pay without delay, or even investigation. The wife either knew not, or heeded not, the private circumstances of her husband. She saw her house filled with the best company; gave expensive entertainments, and resorted with avidity to every public amusement which had the power of chasing away reflection and care. The husband, eager to alleviate the stings of conscience arising from the neglect of a young family, plunged still deeper into riot and profusion, and paid no longer any attention to the concerns of his mercantile affairs, which had hitherto been in a very flourishing situation. His partner, an easy old man of indepen-



dant property, who never quitted his arm-chair, was not made acquainted with the excesses of Mr. —, till intelligence from the bankers' arrived, stating, that not only the funds of the house were exhausted, but that, from an unusual grant of credit, they had permitted themselves to be considerably overdrawn. The affairs of the house thus involved, the most prompt and speedy measures became necessary to save their falling credit. A consultation was held, and a proposition made, and adopted, to employ the talents of young Charles, who was a proficient in the art of drawing, in forging the names of some eminent mercantile houses on foreign bills, and thereby raise an immediate supply. Charles seduced into the practice of this expedient by the treacherous spendthrift, unknowingly committed an act, by which, agreeable to the laws of his country, his life became forfeited. He succeeded so well in the art of imitation, that a second attempt was shortly after made for raising a more considerable sum: in negotiating the bills however, a discovery took place, which instantly obliged the parties to seek safety in flight. Not a moment was now to be lost; Charles was made acquainted with the duplicity that had been practised upon him, and being hurried into a carriage, wherein a few valuables had been hastily packed up, departed immediately with Mr. — for Dover. They embarked in the packet, and arrived safe on the continent. Continuing their route they proceeded to the south of France, where they took up their residence, and remained concealed, unknowing and unknown.

In the mean time the uncle, confined with the gout, was left to support all the horrors of his situation. Bankruptcy ensued, and a disposition manifested on the part of the persons who had been duped, and were the chief sufferers, to have the infirm old man arrested, operated as his death warrant. In a few hours he was found lifeless in his bed, not without strong suspicion of having taken poison. The sequel of these acts of depravity and guilt was no less fatal to the beautiful but frail Mrs. —, who being, in consequence of her husband's elopement, deprived of pecuniary resources, and not inclined to follow or share his fate in a foreign country, accepted an offer, that was shortly after made her, of living with a man of fashion. Supported by his liberality, her extravagance now became unbounded; but her reign of pleasure was short. Tired of her charms, he quitted his mistress in a few weeks, and left her wholly destitute of future support. One lover succeeded another, till her abandoned conduct soon reduced her to a state of poverty, misery, and contempt; her health had likewise been considerably impaired, and with-

out making one commendable effort, to gain a livelihood by industrious means, she sunk from poverty to guilt, and at length attempted to retrieve her fortunes by a deed of unexampled wickedness and cruelty. She had a daughter!—a beautiful girl of sixteen, in whose countenance every sweet and gentle virtue was portrayed; the bloom of health was marked on her features, and sensibility evinced itself in her every action. But alas! how often are the children of promise doomed, in the spring of life, to mourn—their blossoms blasted in the bud!

Upon this maiden flower, just expanding into bloom, fell the rude storm of adversity,

And like the tyrannous breathing of the north,  
Shook all its buds from blowing—

Julia! it was mine to see thee but once! yet pity still cherishes a tender recollection of that interview. Thy modest grief! the dignified serenity that sat on thy brow on this trying occasion! could I witness these and not participate in thy sorrows?—Sincerely did I share them; and so lasting is the impression of injured excellence, that revolving years have not been able to efface thy image from my mind.

This artless, exemplary girl, had been placed in a seminary, far from her mother's contaminating sight: here she dwelt in peace, improving daily in every virtue and accomplishment that could adorn her sex. The mother, meantime, distressed in her circumstances in proportion to the decay of those charms which now failed to procure her admirers, resolved, for a pecuniary consideration, to sacrifice her too lovely daughter, at the same shrine of prostitution to which she had herself been led a willing victim. The thought was no sooner entertained than executed. She quitted the habitation of misery and contempt, and, like an infernal demon, entered the abode of innocence and peace. Julia was claimed, and carried unresisting and unknowing to her mother's dwelling; who having, through the means of a common pander of vice, obtained the promise of a large sum from an abandoned reprobate, to whom her daughter was to be sacrificed, disclosed the plan, cloaked under the false garb and specious mask of pleasure, to her own offspring. From so infamous a proposal, even thus colored and disguised, the virtuous, innocent Julia shrank, as at the sight of a basilisk. From arguments and entreaties her mother proceeded to threats, in case a compliance should not be given within the period of a few days. Neither the prayers nor tears of her virtuous daughter, in the mean time, made the smallest impression on the obdurate heart and debased mind of the vicious parent. A



sense of filial duty prevented the suffering Julia from disclosing the horrid scheme in agitation. The debauched dotard, who, by dint of bribery, was to triumph over such virtue, turned, saw her in this trying situation, and was just meditating to seize upon his prey, when, with fearful steps, she flew for relief to a former friend of her father's. She mentioned not her situation such as it was—the dreadful alternative that awaited her—the brink of ruin on which she stood—but only solicited to be reinstated in her former residence, where she might once more find happiness in retirement. This was readily promised, but, alas, ! too late to prevent the catastrophe that ensued. Julia returned home, but to what a home ! a fiend awaited her arrival ! she had to encounter immediate infamy, dishonour, and ruin !—Here let me draw a veil over the melancholy history ; suffice it to add, that Julia, in the hour of despair, friendless, unprotected, and left to her distracted thoughts, sought refuge in another and a better world. Hers had not been a life of pleasure, but it had been a life of peace and innocence ; could then her unsullied mind bear up against the stigma of vice, the scorn of the severely virtuous, of such whose hearts had ever possessed half her innate modesty and worth, yet to whose slights and contumely she must have been hourly exposed ? her soul shrank from the prospect ; urged by despair, she hurried from her mother's blasting sight, and, bereft of reason, rushed unbidden into the presence of her Maker ! Poor Julia !—and shall a deed committed in the hour when reason was over-powered by the phrenzy of despair, cancel the purity of thy life, unmarked almost by error ? Ah, no ! the many acts of virtue thou hast done shall plead for thee at the throne of mercy, and there mayest thou still look down and witness the tear of sympathy I shed on thy sorrows and untimely fate.—Peace to thy manes !—sweet Julia.

*From Mercier's View of Paris.*

#### PALAIS ROYAL.

An unique point on the globe—visit London, Amsterdam, Madrid, Vienna, you will see nothing similar to it. A prisoner might there beguile the sense of captivity, unmindful of his liberty, till after the lapse of several years. It is precisely the spot which Plato would have assigned the captive, in order to retain him without a jailor, and without violence, by the voluntary chains of pleasure ; it is called the Capital of Paris, and the commodities of the whole world are found there. A young man of twenty,

with fifty thousand livres per annum, will be unable to quit this fairy scene ; he will become a Rinaldo in the palace of Armida, & if the Italian hero lost in the bewitching labyrinths of the enchantress his time and almost his glory, our young man will also here lose his honour, and, perhaps, his fortune ; here alone will he feel enjoyment ; other scenes will appear tasteless and insipid. This enchanting abode is a small luxurious city enclosed within a greater ; it is the temple of voluptuousness, in which every thing respires delight, and where dazzling vices have banished every vestige of modesty. Whatever the heart can wish, or fancy suggest, is here realized. The serious and the gay, the learned and the frivolous will here recognize the objects of their pursuit. Physiologists, chemists, anatomists, linguists, read their courses. Women, who have renounced the pedantic gravity which distinguished the dames of the old hotel Rambouillet sport with the sciences, which serve them for playthings, and amuse them as much as their spaniel or paroquet.

In the capital of the Chinese empire, there is a comic fair, which consists of a miniature representation of cities in the space of a quarter of a league ; all the trades, noises, entrances, exits, and even the rogueries of them, are imitated by a crowd of actors—one is a merchant,—another an artisan,—this is a soldier,—that an officer,—the shops are opened, their contents displayed,—purchasers appear,—one quarter is for silk, another for cloth, a third porcelain, a fourth for varnish—clothes, furniture, female ornaments are exhibited, with books for the inquisitive and learned,—there are inns and taverns, whence issue hawkers,—salesmen pull your sleeve and tease you to buy, contention ensues, the archer arrests the disputants, who are taken before the judge, and condemned to the bastinado. In executing this pleasant sentence the actor is slightly touched, and the pretended culprit imitates the plaintive cries of a sufferer, to the infinite diversion of the spectators, the pick-pocket is not forgotten, he is permitted to exercise his adroitness at the expence of the by-stander ; the whole city, is, in short, imitated, and the emperor is confounded with his subjects. The idea of this picturesque fair appears so fanciful, that I would fain suggest the introduction of a panorama, of the good city of Paris at Petersburg. It would afford an opportunity of presenting to a great sovereign, and to a nation for whom it would possess the attraction of novelty, the faithful image of a far-famed and far distant capital. Imagine the laughter which would be excited at Moscow, Madrid, and Vienna, by the costume of the Parisians ; the confusion of all orders of people, the variety of colours, the im-

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mense multitude, would form a scene not unworthy the pen of a new Lucian. Nor should the markets be omitted—what could be more diverting than the sight of those waves of men of all ranks, sizes, and complexions? Conceive a Volanges acting the lieutenant de police, and Dougazou personating the prevost des marchands; other comedians should play the sheriffs, the life-guard, the inspector, the commissary, the spy, and if to these were added, the embarrassments of the streets, the ludicrous effect would be complete. The fête should close with a somewhat of theatrical spectacle! Paris being under a rainy sky, a copious shower should descend on the people, which would lead to a display of the fiacres; the coach-man with a grave mustachio should figure with the coach-man in a spruce frock; chaises, coaches, carts, and drays might intermingle, and the general confusion or dismay, would produce a fund of merriment to the mischief-loving spectators. The Romans had their saturnalia, a fête of a similar nature could not fail to amuse the Parisians, and might eventually correct many of their absurdities.

The Palais-Royal is admirably calculated for the scene of action here described: it contains within itself an inexhaustible universe of pleasure and luxury. When Lucullus, the vanquisher of Tigranes and of Mithridates, the conqueror of Pontus and Armenia, the disciple of Epicurus, the imitator of Sardanapalus; that Lucullus, who in the hall of Apollo, welcomed Pompey and Cicero to feasts, in which Asiatic luxury was surpassed; though the empire was at his back, and the land and water laid under contribution, yet could not even Lucullus himself have procured his illustrious guests the enjoyments to be purchased by a young modern prodigal in the Palais-Royal, who combines at his splendid table a greater sum of pleasurable sensations, than in the most flourishing epoch of Roman greatness had been called into existence.

#### TO READERS.

We hope that the essay of which we publish the conclusion to-day will not be wholly unproductive of its purposed end.

It is indeed to be regretted that whilst luxury makes such rapid strides amongst us, the polish which is its usual attendant remains so far behind. Every successive season is marked by the increasing display of finery in our houses, and our persons while our manners, alas! retain their pristine coarseness. We view society with no cynic's eye; and often mix in the gay circles, that assemble for the purposes of pleasure and amusement: But as the hey-day of youth is past with us, and as from the nature of our situation in life, we are necessarily uninfluenced by the objects, which occupy the minds of most persons, we can observe the world in the light of a calm, dispassionate spectator.

Vast changes have been made within a few years in the general plan of female education: and yet what has it produced? An increase of folly, ignorance and pride. The domestic duties in which young women were formerly instructed, are entirely laid aside—and what is substituted in their stead? At an immense expence which few can afford, they learn to strum some wretched tunes upon the piano, they acquire a smattering of French which is abandoned entirely with their school books; add to this dancing, spitting muslin, dressing themselves à la mode and the system is complete, whilst they are left destitute of every useful information that might improve their minds, refine their manners, and enlarge their understandings. To these general observations we doubtless exultingly remember many bright and honourable exceptions—our city can boast of young ladies who would be an ornament to any society in the universe: but they are yet too rare—and our young men what are they, what their talents, what their acquirements? Ignorance, impertinence and pride are amongst the foremost qualifications of the greatest number.

Observe them at an evening party; mark the disrespectful nonchalance of their deportment towards the other sex, “the shewy smile of young presumption plays” in every feature—they do not take the pains to instruct themselves sufficiently to converse on any one topic, and only that the brag-table, to which they often sit down like so many greedy cormorants, to devour gain, sometimes furnishes them an opportunity of making a noise, the lady of the house might be compelled to introduce a marine list and a price current, to keep them from the arms of Morpheus. It is no less true that there are amongst us many brilliant and elegant young men. But this is by no means their general character—and it has been well observed that the “women are more than a century advanced in civilization than the opposite sex.”

Let it not be said that the longer we remain without the refinements of older nations, we shall be free from their vices—could we have preserved simplicity, it would have been indeed desirable; but the difference between simplicity & vulgarity is wide; the former we have long since lost: the latter flourishes amongst us in most luxuriant growth. We all vie with each other in shew and splendour; notwithstanding our republican principles, Miss, whose papa keeps a chariot, looks with ineffable contempt on Miss, who walks on foot; and the merchant who happens to possess some thousands extraordinary, looks upon himself as a being to whom all ought to pay the homage of profound respect, while wealth constitutes the sole distinction among us.

Since then, nothing can stop the progress of luxury, is it not to be wished that we might temper the growing evil with some advantages; and that if we equal other nations in folly, extravagance and pride, we should not be found always deficient, in

“Those polish'd arts, that humanize mankind,  
“Soften the rude, and calm the boisterous mind”

#### Errata.

An important mistake was made in the 9th number of the Sylph, page 396, 1st column, 11th line, instead of “a million,” read *some thousands*.—Page 395, read 1789, instead of 1798.—Same page, 42d line, add, if at least the official list of those who were guillotined may be believed.



## ORIGINAL POETRY.

## LINES

ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND, ON HIS BIRTH DAY,

December 11.

Altho' stern winter hoarsely sung  
In roughest strains thy lullaby,  
Fair science o'er thy cradle hung,  
And smiling hail'd thy infant cry.

Those storms, sweet babe, (she softly said)  
No emblem of thy life shall prove,  
Protected from the blast, thou'rt laid  
Secure, and watch'd with tender love.

So, when life's storms around thee howl,  
A calm retreat I'll sure provide,  
Rich stores shall feast thy ardent soul,  
And knowledge ope her portals wide.

Then binding o'er thy sleeping form,  
Her magic influence o'er thee shed,  
With fervour blest thy natal morn,  
Then spread her golden wings and fled.

Oft may this morn so blest return,  
While love and science still preside,  
For them thy bosom still shall burn,  
And they as constant be thy guide.

MARIA.

## A BALLAD.

THIS BALLAD WAS PROBABLY SUGGESTED BY THE FOLLOWING

EPIGRAM IN MARTIAL.

*Intactas quæ mittis mihi, Polla, coronas,**A te vexatas malo tenere rosas.*

EPIG. XC. LIB. II.

Thou hast sent me a flowery band,  
And told me 'twas fresh from the field;  
That the leaves were untouch'd by the hand;  
And the purest of odors would yield.

And indeed it is fragrant and fair;  
But if it were handled by thee,  
It would bloom with a livelier air,  
And would surely be sweeter to me!

Then take it, and let it entwine  
Thy tresses, so flowing and bright;  
And each little flowret will shine  
More rich than a gem to my sight.

Let the odorous gale of thy breath  
Embalm it with many a sigh—  
Nay let it be wither'd to death  
Beneath the warm noon of thine eye—

And, instead of the dew that it bears,  
The dew dropping fresh from the tree;  
On its leaves let me number the tears  
That affection has stolen from thee!

## THE TEAR.

Said to be written by the late Queen of Denmark.

How prone the bosom is to sigh!  
How prone to weep the human eye!  
As through this painful life we steer;  
This valley of a sigh and Tear.

When by the heart with sorrow griev'd,  
A thousand blessings are receiv'd,  
With every comfort that can cheer,  
'Tis then bright virtue's grateful Tear.

When ev'ry parting pang is o'er,  
And friends, long absent, meet once more,  
Fraught with delight and love sincere,  
'Tis then sweet friendship's joyful Tear.

When too fond lovers doom'd to part,  
Feel deadly pangs invade their heart,  
Torn from the object each holds dear,  
'Tis then, O then! the parting Tear.

When wretches on the earth reclin'd,  
Their doom of condemnation sign'd,  
(The end of earthly beings near)  
'Tis then soft pity's gentle Tear.

When mothers, O, the grateful sight!  
Their children view with fond delight,  
Surrounded by a charge so dear,  
'Tis then the fond maternal Tear.

When lovers see the beauteous maid  
To whom their fond attention's paid,  
With conscious blushing sobs, draw near,  
'Tis then, O then the pleading Tear,

When two dear friends of kindred mind,  
By every gen'rous tie combin'd,  
Behold their dreaded parting near,  
'Tis then, O then, the parting Tear.

But when the wretch with sin oppress'd,  
Strikes in an agony his breast;  
All torn with guilt, remorse, and fear  
'Tis then the best the saving Tear.

True wit is like the brilliant stone  
Dug from the Indian mine;  
Which boasts too diff'rent pow'rs in one,  
To cut as well as shine.  
Genius, like that, if polish'd right,  
With the same gifts abounds;  
Appears at once both keen and bright,  
And sparkles, while it wounds.